NORTH CAROLINA
MUSEUM OF HISTORY

History Happens Here

Tools and Gadgets History Mystery

Distance Learning Program

Teacher Supplement

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Program Overview

Tools and Gadgets History Mystery focuses on ways that historians unravel mysteries from the past. Through interactive discussions and hands-on activities, students will become historians as they use observations, analysis, and hypothesis to identify artifacts from long ago.

The **Program Materials** cover activities integrated into the one-hour program. They include an artifact identification exercise and a work sheet.

The **Preprogram Activities** include a discussion sheet and a work sheet. The **Postprogram Activities** include an artifact summary, several articles from *Tar Heel Junior Historian* magazine, and suggested activities. These materials will encourage students to think about how historians and scientists use observation, analysis, and hypothesis to figure out what happened in the past.

Subject Resources from the North Carolina Museum of History History in a Box Kits

From Farm to Factory: Agriculture and Industry in North Carolina

For most of its history, North Carolina has had a predominantly rural economy. New technology that made farming more efficient also led to the growth of industry in the state. In recent years, the state's economy has turned sharply away from agriculture. Learn the factors—who, what, where, when, and how—that contributed to the shift from farm to factory. Identify objects, analyze historical photographs, study geography and its relationship to food, and learn about life in a mill village, the effects of child labor, and the importance of technology today and in the future. The kit is available for loan for three weeks at no charge (you pay return UPS shipping). To order, call 919-807-7984 or go to http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/edu/HistoryBox.html for an order form.

Primarily North Carolina

What is the difference between a primary and a secondary source? Artifacts, photographs, and **documents** from North Carolina's past help students explore the raw materials used to understand history. Discover what objects and spaces tell about life and society. Working with primary sources gives students skills and confidence in research, writing, and interpretation. The kit is available for loan for three weeks at no charge (you pay return UPS shipping). To order, call 919-807-7984 or go to http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/edu/HistoryBox.html for an order form.

Preprogram Activities: Preprogram Discussion Sheet

Have the students sit around you on the floor or at their desks. Read aloud to them, pausing to ask and answer questions. This discussion sheet is a framework for you to build upon. Feel free to use your own examples that you know will appeal to your students. Key vocabulary is underlined.
Time required: 15 minutes

Have you ever wondered how we know about the way people lived long ago? How do teachers and parents know about life in the "old" days?

Historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists study objects made and used by people who lived long ago to learn about the past. They call the objects artifacts. An artifact is any object made or used by a human. It can be pottery, a diary, a plant, or even old garbage!

Historians study artifacts to learn about what happened long ago. Like detectives, they analyze artifacts to learn about what people did, where they went, and what they owned. Historians also use many primary documents to learn about the past. Some common primary documents are journals, inventories, photographs, and diaries.

Many people kept diaries long ago—even young people like you! Do you keep a diary? What things do you (would you) write about?

What could a historian learn by reading your diary?

Did you know that even garbage gives us clues about the past? Some archaeologists dig up garbage from long ago to learn about how people lived. They find this garbage in deep holes where people threw away their old clothing, bones from food, and broken things like plates and bottles. The holes where they find this old garbage are called trash pits, or middens. A modern midden is a landfill. As history detectives, archaeologists analyze discarded objects to learn about the people who made or used them. In the future, archaeologists may dig up our landfills to learn more about how we lived.

What do you think they will find?

Anthropologists study objects, environments, and behaviors to learn about traditions and cultures. They analyze these clues to learn how people lived together in families and communities. Anthropologists also study what people believed in and what kinds of things were important to them.

All of these clues—letters, diaries, objects, environments, and behaviors—tell us about how people lived long ago. Some clues are easier to understand than others, and sometimes even historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists get confused. Still, being a history detective can be great fun!

Preprogram Activities: Be an Anthropologist from the Future!

Time required: 20 minutes

1. What would an anthropologist from the future learn about you by studying your room?

   In the space below, make a list of things that can be found in your room.

2. Imagine that you are an anthropologist from the future who is trying to figure out what the lives of people are like now by studying your room.

   How many people would you think live in this room? ____

   What is your *evidence*, or what makes you think that?

3. What kinds of clothing does the person who lives in this room wear? What is your *evidence*, or what makes you think that?

4. What kinds of things does the person who lives in the room like? Name at least two things that the person probably likes. What is your *evidence*, or what makes you think that?

5. What else can you tell about the person who lives in this room? Be sure to give your *evidence*.

Postprogram Activities

These activities include several articles from *Tar Heel Junior Historian* magazine. If you would like to receive free issues of future magazines, form a Tar Heel Junior Historian Association club in your school. To receive a membership application, please call Jessica Pratt at 919-807-7985, e-mail thjhaclubs@ncdcr.gov, or visit the museum's Web site at http://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/thjha/index.html.

1. Have a Mystery Artifact Scavenger Hunt in your classroom or school. Divide the class into teams and have the teams search the school for objects that either are or will be mystery artifacts. Imagine objects out of their usual places. Do you know what they are for? How do you know that? Can you find objects that have only one purpose? Did those objects exist twenty years ago? One hundred years ago? Do you think an object will still be used in ten years? Fifty years?

2. Try weaving with felt and take home a place mat or wall hanging (page 7).

3. Use the primary resource of photography to identify tools and gadgets used in making cotton cloth. Small groups will study photographs of the cloth-making process to see how clothes were made and what tools they can identify (pages 8–20).

4. Share the article "Museum Detectives Use Solid Evidence" (pages 21–25) from the spring 1992 issue of *Tar Heel Junior Historian* magazine. Guide students to explore their own material culture by bringing objects from home that tell about themselves, their families, or their culture. Have students work in teams to interpret what the objects suggest about the needs and values of the people who use them.

5. Share the article "Oral Historians Listen to Witnesses" (pages 26–27) from the spring 1992 issue of *Tar Heel Junior Historian* magazine. Have students develop questions and interview family members about the past. Your class may gather general oral history, or they may prefer to focus their investigation around specific questions. Some possibilities might be to examine what young people have done for fun, how the prices of things have changed over time, or how school experiences have changed.

Postprogram Activities: Practice Weaving with Felt

Materials
2 felt rectangles, different colors
scissors
glue

Directions

Pick one felt rectangle for the base and another for the weaving strips. Cut slits about 2 inches apart in the base felt. **Do not** cut all the way to the edges of the felt—leave a border of about ½ inch.

Cut the other sheet of felt into 1-inch-wide strips. Weave the strips through the base one at a time. Make sure to alternate the strips by weaving one strip over and under, the next strip under and over, and so on. After you finish weaving a strip, push it close to the other strips to tighten the weave. Glue down the ends that are sticking up, and you are done! Use your creation as a place mat or wall hanging.

Postprogram Activities: Photograph Analysis

This lesson plan is based on information from the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration Web site, www.archives.gov.

Objectives

- Understand how photographs can help us understand the past.
- Learn to analyze and interpret photographs.
- Use photographs to tell a story.

Introduction

How are the clothes we wear produced? Farm families once grew cotton and picked it, spun yarn and wove it into fabric, and sewed the fabric into clothing, all by hand. During the Industrial Revolution, machines became more prevalent and factories took over the production of cloth. In North Carolina, it took much longer for technology to reach the farm than the factory.

Photographs as Primary Sources

Like other kinds of documentary artwork, photographs tell us much about the past. Beyond showing what something or someone looked like, they reveal the values of the photographer, the subject, the time period, and even the community.

For example, formal family portraits often reflect the ideals or tastes of the time. Examine a family portrait. Is the setting plain or fancy? Does the backdrop have an exotic scene painted on it? What props are used? What kind of clothing are the subjects wearing?

The angle of a photograph gives clues to what the photographer or subject wanted to convey. Buildings or people were often photographed from below rather than straight on. This view transmitted the subconscious message that the subjects were important. Conversely, subjects could be photographed from above to emphasize their insignificance.

Photographs document the construction, architecture, and decoration of buildings at certain moments in their histories, as well as trends and styles—from clothing to hair fashions to cars—across the decades.

Photographers face certain ethical questions: Is it acceptable to stage a photograph and present it as an authentic scene? Is it appropriate to ask a subject to dress in a manner that conveys a message even when that message is not accurate? When documenting a battle scene, should one help a person in distress or photograph the scene and move on? The choices a photographer makes reflect the values and ethics of the individual, period, or community.

Materials

9 Photographs beginning on page 11; Photographic transparency; Activity Sheet: Analyzing Photographs—make 8 copies; Sheets of 8½ × 11 inch paper, cut into quarters

Procedure

1. Download photograph No. 1 and copy it onto a transparency. Project the transparency and explain that the students will learn how to analyze photographs to identify time, place, objects, activities, and people. Give the students time to examine the photograph. Cover it with a sheet of paper, cut into quarters, and have the students make a list of what they saw. Uncover one section of the photograph and ask them to look more closely at it. List what they see on the board. Continue the process, uncovering one section of the image at a time. Once the whole image is visible, ask the students what story it tells.
2. Divide the students into small groups. Give each group one of the remaining eight photographs, a copy of the Analyzing Photographs activity sheet, and a sheet of paper. The groups will analyze their photographs using the process described above.
3. The groups will share with the class their photographs and analyses. As a class, arrange the photographs in order. Using the photographs and objects, tell the story "From Cotton to Cloth."

Postprogram Activities:
Activity Sheet: Analyzing Photographs

From the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration Web site, www.archives.gov.

Step 1. Observation

A. Study the photograph for two minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.

B. Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph.

People	Objects	Activities

Step 2. Inference

Based on your observations, list three things you can infer from this photograph.

_____

_____

_____

Step 3. Questions

A. What questions does this photograph raise?

_____

_____

_____

B. Where could you find the answers to these questions?

_____

_____

_____

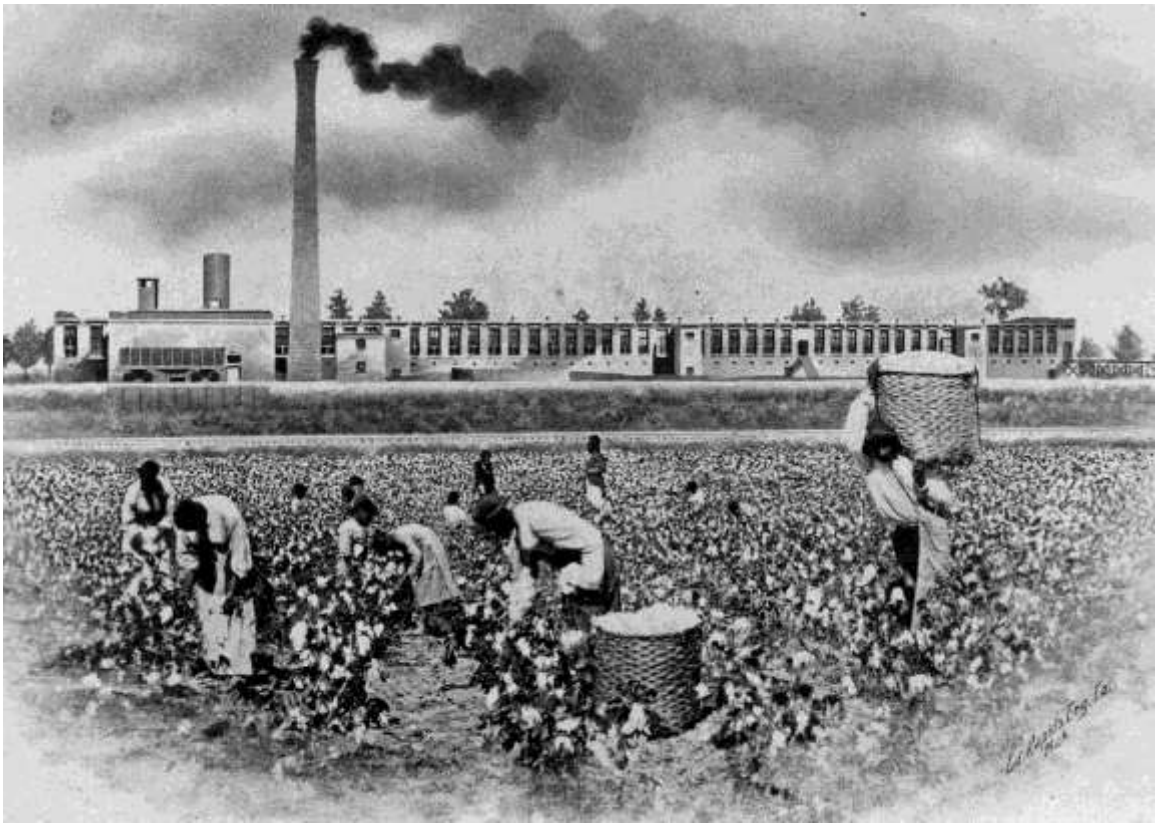
Postprogram Activities:
General Questions When Examining a Photograph

1. Identify the image
    1. Who was the photographer?
    2. Is there a caption? Title? Anything written with the image?
    3. Where did the image come from?
    4. What is/are the subject(s) of the picture?
2. Reason for the photograph
    1. Why was it taken? For whom?
    2. Is there a theme being represented? Specific event? What is it?
    3. What is the photographer trying to convey to the viewer?
3. Components of the image
    1. Examine all of the subjects, colors (if a color image), and sections of the image. Is there significance for these elements? What?
    2. Is the photograph organized into parts? Do the background and foreground have different meanings?
4. Effectiveness of the image
    1. Is there a clear message?
    2. Does the photograph tell a story? Pose new questions?
    3. Is it useful in making inferences, deductions, or generalizations about the subjects?
5. Items to look for when examining an image
    1. Where is the location?
    2. In a landscape image, what is the terrain like? Rural or urban? Mountainous or flat? Skyscrapers or farmland?
    3. Who are the people portrayed? What are they doing? What do they look like? What is the relationship between the different people being portrayed?
    4. Manmade links subjects.
    5. Architecture.
6. Has the image been manipulated?
    1. The computer has changed the way you need to look at photographs.
    2. Does the image have the credit “photo illustration”? This is an indicator that it has been manipulated.
7. Different types of photographs to consider
    1. Landscapes
    2. People and landscapes
    3. Portraits of people
    4. People in action
    5. Objects

Dan McDowell designed this process guide for the Triton and Patterns Projects of San Diego Unified School District, Calif. It is republished here with his permission.
Keep current on the best teaching and learning resources for North Carolina classrooms! Sign up for monthly e-mail updates from LEARN NC. Just send an e-mail to lnc-updates-request@vote.learn.unc.edu with “subscribe” in the subject line.

List of Photographs

1. Workers pick cotton across the road from a factory. From Daniel Augustus Tompkins, *Cotton Mill, Commercial Features* (Charlotte, NC; published by the author, 1899).
2. Picking Cotton, North Carolina, ca. 1880. From the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.
3. Worker plows a field with a hand-plow and mule. From the North Carolina Museum of History collection.
4. Rolls of cotton on textile machinery at Tolar Hart Mill, Fayetteville, 1937. From the North Carolina State Archives.
5. Taking cotton to market. From Daniel Augustus Tompkins, *Cotton Mill, Commercial Features* (Charlotte, NC: published by the author, 1899).
6. "Spinner in Vivian Cotton Mills. Been at it 2 years. Cherryville, NC, 11/10/1908" Photograph by Lewis Hine. National Archives and Records Administration, National Child Labor Committee Photographs Taken by Lewis Hine, ca. 1912 (ARC Identifier: 523111).
7. Spools of thread on textile machinery at Tolar Hart Mill, Fayetteville, 1937. From the North Carolina State Archives.
8. Jacquard loom, Burlington. From the North Carolina State Archives.
9. Weighing cotton, North Carolina, ca. 1930s. From the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.



Photograph No. 1, for transparency

Photograph No. 2

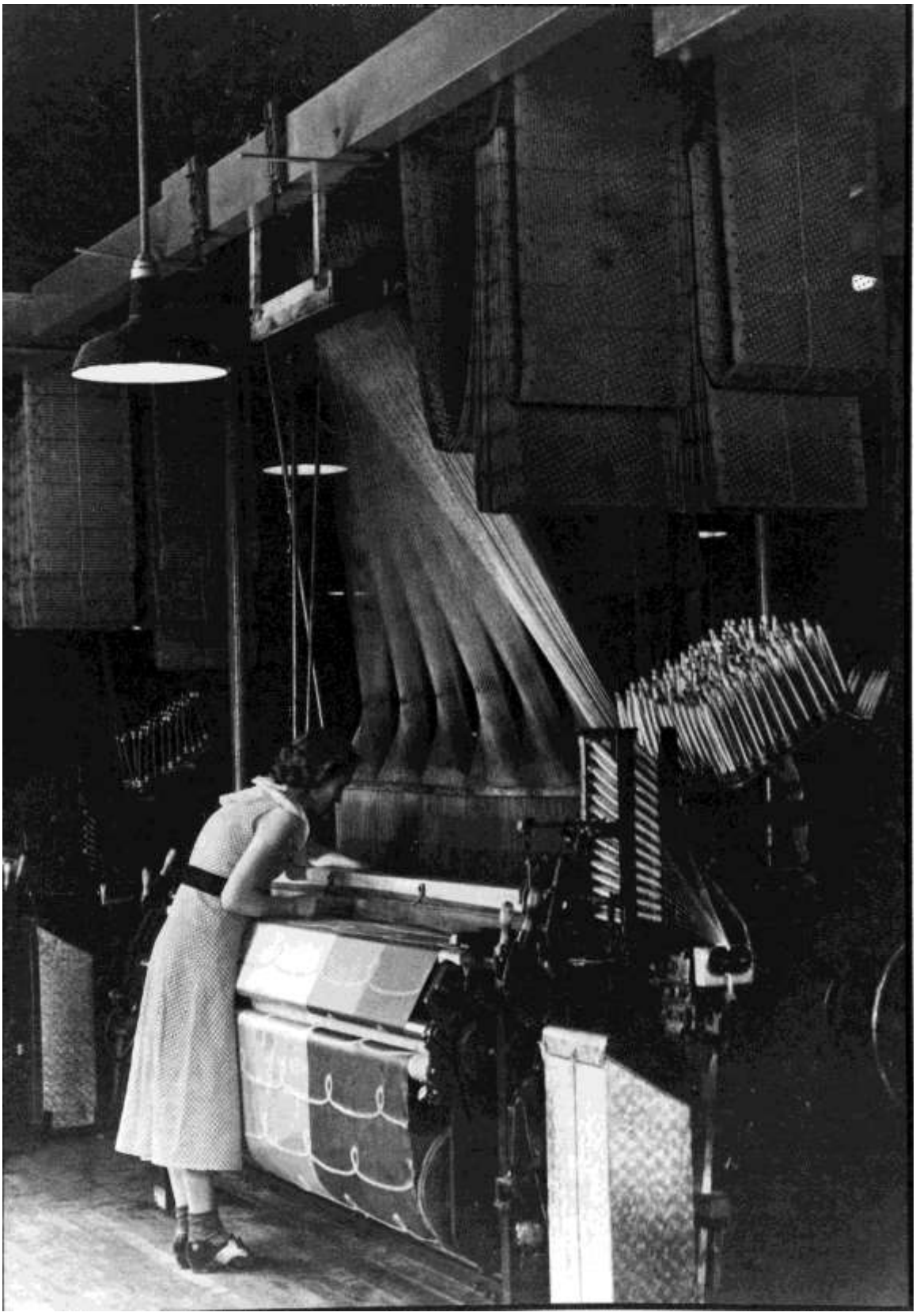
Photograph No. 3

Photograph No. 4

Photograph No. 5

Photograph No. 6

Photograph No. 7



Photograph No. 8

Photograph No. 9

Museum detectives use solid evidence

By Wesley S. Creel

People have always made and used things in their lives. Those things may be as simple as a pin or a bow and arrow or as complex as a car or the space shuttle. History detectives who study them can tell the history of people, places, or events by looking at these things and understanding how and why they were used. They call these old objects artifacts, and the study of these objects and the people who used them they call **material culture**.

How do you think museum detectives can tell about the history of people through their artifacts? Think about what it would be like if you found something on the ground you had never seen before. How would you find out what it is? You might ask your friends, your parents, or your teachers. You might look it up in a book. It would take some time, but you probably could find information about it. These history detectives do the same thing.

The first step that museum detectives take in investigating artifacts is called description. This step has two parts. During the first part, museum registrars measure the artifact. Using rulers they measure width, height, and length. Then they turn the artifacts over to curators for the second part of description.

Curators and their assistants, called catalogers, look at the artifact very carefully and closely to describe what it is made of and how they think it was made. Sometimes they cannot tell much about an object by looking at it. So, they must talk to someone who used it or made it or someone who is an expert in this kind of artifact. They may even look for other things like it in reference books.

Curators and catalogers also do historical research. It might include information from secondary sources like county histories or primary sources like census reports, oral history interviews, or personal papers. This research explains why an artifact is historically important and how it fits into a society or a culture.

During this part they ask questions and try to find answers: how is this artifact different from any other artifact? How is it similar? How does it fit into the area or the time period? But one of the most important questions they ask is: what was it originally used for?

This basket was found along with other artifacts in Polk County. Museum detectives describe, document, classify, and interpret objects like this so that we can learn more about ourselves and North Carolina history.

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Now the curators begin the second step called documentation and classification. In documentation, they want to know more about the artifact: how it was made, how it was used, why one material was used instead of another, why it was designed the way it was, why it was made and used, who used it, how they used it, and when they used it.

Based on their research investigation and answers to these questions in documentation, museum curators and their assistants try to place the artifact they are investigating into a category. This is called classification. You may want to think of categories in this way. There are different kinds of clothes: socks, shoes, shirts, pants, underclothes, sweaters, and coats. These are categories—or classes—of clothes and they are grouped by their different uses—what they were originally used for. So museum curators use a similar system to classify artifacts according to what they were originally used for.

The third step—called interpretation—is conducted by many different people in the museum who use information from the curator's investigation. The museum curators and catalogers write scholarly articles and books or give lectures. They also provide information about artifacts to exhibit designers who will create exhibits and educators who will create educational programs. Museum educators produce audiovisual programs, arrange demonstrations, produce publications, and give tours and talks.

We have described how museum detectives—registrars, curators, catalogers, exhibit designers, and educators—study material culture and explain it to visitors. Now we are going to provide an artifact example so that you can investigate it with us. Recently, museum detectives went to the Jackson family farm near Tryon in Polk County to investigate and pick up a large collection of artifacts. The Jackson family owned hundreds of things they had used on their farm from the 1850s to the 1920s, including farm tools and equipment, furniture, clothing, kitchen utensils, quilts and coverlets, and weapons.

During their work, one artifact stood out: a wooden basket. Let's go through the description, documentation and classification, and interpretation processes for this basket.

The registrars begin the description process. The basket measures 14 1/4 inches high, 17 5/8 inches long, and 16 inches wide. The curators and catalogers now take a closer look. The handle and the rods—long, thin, young branches of wood—are made of oak, with metal wire to replace broken or missing ones. It was made by hand by taking the rods and weaving them together.

Curators and catalogers begin the next step, documentation and classification. Documentation is first. They

In description, museum registrars measure the basket and describe its appearance.

compare this basket to other baskets they have seen in the museum, in other museums, or in reference books. They discover that metal buckets, tin cans, glass jars, and other machine-made containers were rare on a farm in the piedmont foothills in the 1800s. Baskets were among the most common containers during this period. They could have been made from local and inexpensive materials, and often they were made by family members or by neighbors. Baskets were used to carry laundry, to carry vegetables from the garden to the house, or to carry wood from the woodshed for heating and cooking stoves.

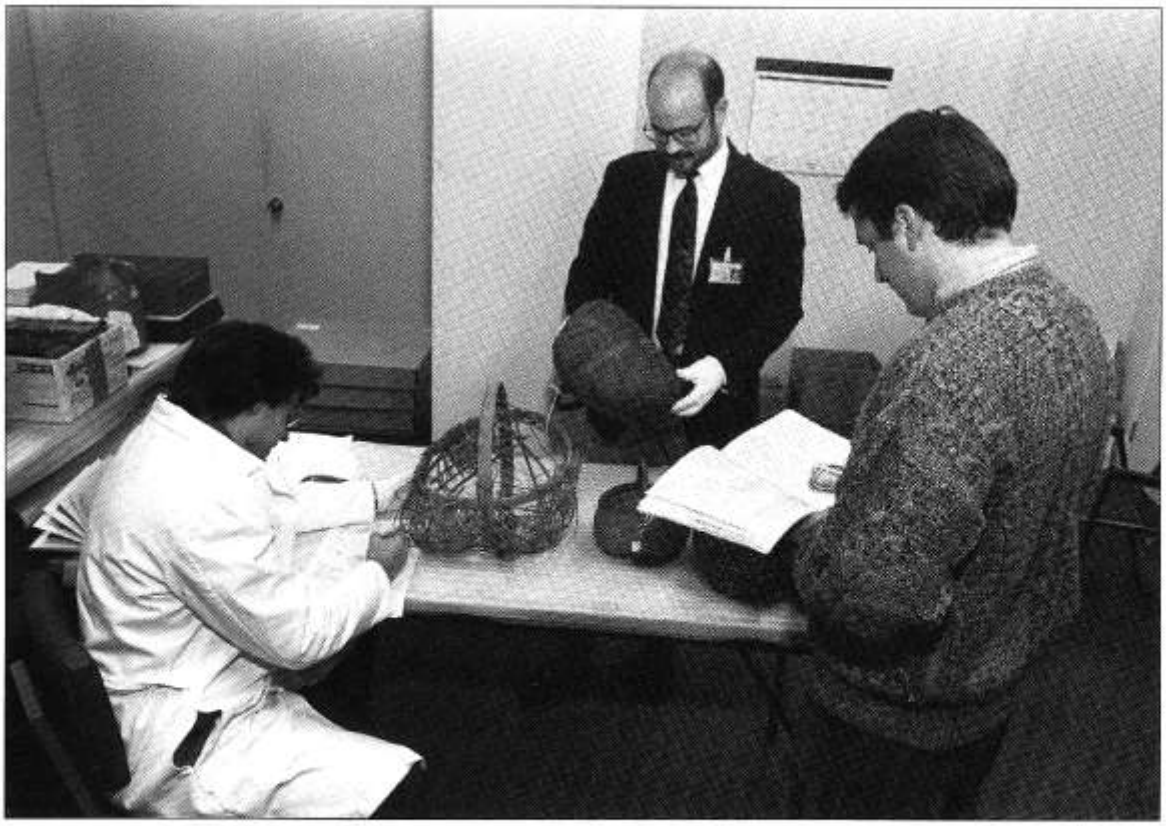
Comparing this basket to other baskets of different shapes and sizes, detectives think it was used to carry eggs. And they think that it was used during the late 1800s and early 1900s in this area. And being made of oak splints, it was made of the same materials as other baskets during this time.

Now the curators and catalogers have questions about the people who made and used the basket. For instance, were the eggs collected by the family for the family? Were they collected to sell for cash? Or were they collected for both? Which person in the family used the basket to collect eggs? Was collecting eggs a job for an adult or a child? Was it a job for a grandparent or a parent? Did a man or woman collect the eggs? If a child collected the eggs, was it the oldest or the youngest? Was it a boy or girl?

Sometimes they ask questions that have no answers and have to guess. Why did the owners keep the basket when it was in such bad shape? Why did the owner of the basket keep repairing it and using it? These are some of the answers they came up with. Perhaps it was in bad shape and the eggs could have fallen out. Perhaps the family was poor and it was the only basket. Maybe the family placed a high value on saving money by using something over and over again for a long time. Maybe it was a "good luck" egg basket. Maybe the basket meant something special to its owner.

Now they look the basket up in a special museum book to see how it fits in different classes of similar or different baskets. This way of classifying is used not only in this museum but in other museums throughout the world. The basket fits into the large class of objects called "Tools and equipment." Within that class it fits in the "Agricultural tools and equipment" class and then into a smaller one called "Baskets, gathering."

The museum curators and educa-



In documentation and classification, museum curators and catalogers try to understand how this basket is like and unlike other baskets. To do this, they read books and compare this basket to other baskets in the museum. They use this information to understand the hows, wheres, and whys of North Carolina history.

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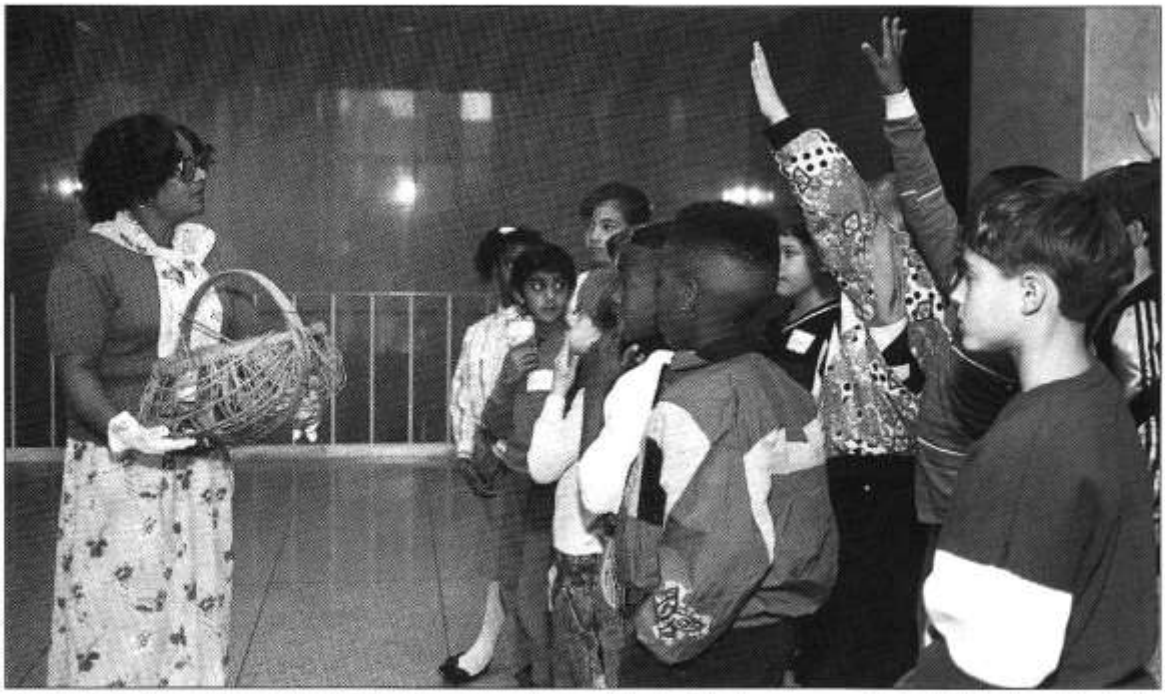

After description, documentation, and classification, this museum educator explains to visitors the importance of the basket in the lives of farm families living in piedmont North Carolina in the late 1880s and early 1900s.

tors work together to tell the story of the basket for people who visit the museum. The curators provide educators with their historical research and their description, documentation, and classification information. Educators use this information to develop interpretive programs and publications, including touch talks, slide programs, and gallery tours. The purpose of the N.C. Museum of History is to "interpret the culture and social, economic, and political history of North Carolina from prehistory to the present; and to collect, preserve, and utilize artifacts and other material significant to the state." So curators and educators must use the basket to tell North Carolinians about some part of their history.

This basket is solid evidence of a group of people who lived and worked on a piedmont farm not too long ago. Museum detectives will use this evidence to explain about North Carolina history.

You can start your own investigation about your material culture. You can start in your house. Do you have any artifacts like egg baskets? Do you have any objects that you use, like an egg basket, to gather food? Is there an object in your house that you would like to know about? What kind of artifacts do you or your parents own that they use in the kitchen? What does that artifact tell you about you? Your family? Your house, your county, your state? What does that artifact tell you about your material culture? You may end up with more questions than answers. ❐

Definition

Material culture is all the objects or tools—artifacts—and the group of people who use them. Museum detectives who study material culture are interested in finding out about how, where, when, and why people use artifacts. They are also interested in

- people dealing with their natural environment (when, how, and where they make shelter, get food, protect themselves from the weather—heat, cold, sun, rain, wind)
- people relating to other people (when they show wealth or status by wearing expensive clothes or work clothes; wearing lots of gold jewelry; driving big expensive cars, small foreign cars, family vans, or four-wheel drive vehicles)
- people expressing their thoughts and ideas (when they speak, create art, or worship)

Oral historians listen to witnesses

by Anne R. Phillips

I met Nevada Jane Hall in 1986 when she was ninety-eight years old. She lived alone in a two-story, white frame house off Lynchburg Road on the western edge of Stokes County. "Moved from over yonder in Surry County, lived in a log house over there, two little rooms," she remembers. Her family moved to the Stokes County house in 1891. Nevada Jane, called Miss Vadie, was three years old at the time and sat on top of a wagon load of corn pulled by two borrowed white horses.

Yet life was still tough after she moved with her family: "Traded him [an old horse] for a pair of old mules. How in the world with three children—wasn't one of them big enough to work how they lived. No openings to plant a garden nor nothing. I'll tell you, though, Mama saved

Nevada Jane Hall, Miss Vadie, remembers moving from Surry County to this house in Stokes County in 1891. In oral history interviews, she tells her family history. If this history of her family is similar to many farm families in the piedmont in the early 1900s, how could her oral history help history detectives?

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Miss Vadie as a young woman (on the right) with one of her sisters.

everything. They had to or couldn't have lived."

History detectives often use oral history from people like Miss Vadie to capture personal information. Sometimes this information cannot be found in other primary sources like diaries and letters. People being interviewed by oral historians are like witnesses. Historians carry on conversations with them, explore new directions, follow up points, or ask more about something they find important or interesting. The witnesses can explain thoughts and feelings. For example, Miss Vadie was amazed that her mother could provide clothes for the family with as little as they had: "How she dressed those children, I don't know. She had an aunt that had an old loom, and she'd make cloth so we had wool clothes to wear through the winter. When we got up big enough, they taught us how to knit. With a kerosene lamp, little bitty cookstove, Becky, Mama, and me would set there and knit every night. Figuring about two pair of stockings apiece, and they would last all winter. If the legs was good, next winter ravel them off and knit down below, and they would go another year."

Oral history also fills in gaps left unsaid by other sources. Some history books tell us facts and explain ideas, but they sometimes do not give us details about people or how they felt. Miss Vadie tells that she liked outdoor work. We rarely find this sort of information in books: "I always wished I'd been a man; all I wanted to do was to get out in the fields. Mother did all the cooking. I'd take some twine and I'd knit some mittens; leave your fingers out. Fit them to use your hoe, so your hands would stay white. Long sleeves. I never did burn my skin. We'd plant corn. We'd take a gooseneck hoe. Follow that plow every row."

How does the oral historian study history? The oral historian gathers history by interviewing someone—asking questions. The oral historian points them in a direction or train of thought and listens to the answer and records it on tape. These are often descriptions about themselves, family, community, and events. When Miss Vadie and I talked about tobacco harvesting, I wanted to know more details about selling tobacco. I asked a question and this is what she told me: "After the family primed tobacco . . . they got it cured out, we'd take all the leaves off them stalks, grade it, then tie it up in a bundle. You had to tie it nice. That ain't half of it. Tie that over, and then put it on a two-horse wagon. Drive to Winston-Salem on a dirt road and be gone for three days to sell tobacco."

The first oral history interviews I did were with my own family. I wanted to know, for instance, about

Miss Vadie at a recent birthday party.

my mother's life as a teacher and her own mother's life as a teacher in rural Mecklenburg County, Virginia. So I asked Mama the questions I wanted to know most. What was her mother like? Did Grandmother and Grandfather write letters to each other when they were courting? How did Mama feel when her own mother died when Mama was only eight years old? Why did Mama decide to study music? Only by asking Mama these questions could I find answers. I am grateful that she allowed me to tape-record our conversations.

So when I interviewed Miss Vadie, I asked her some of the questions I had asked Mama. What was Miss Vadie's mother like? Her father? In Miss Vadie's family, who liked to cook? Who built the fires in the woodstove? Did Miss Vadie's mother work in the fields with the crops? Did her sisters prefer work in the fields or in the house? Some information I gleaned by direct questions to Miss Vadie. Other information she volunteered without my questioning.

The *way* Miss Vadie told information as well as *what* she told was important. We do not have that kind of richness when we read letters or books and cannot hear the tone of voice. So the way Miss Vadie looked or spoke, the way she laughed or raised her eyebrows, added more to the story.

To be a good oral historian, you must establish rapport—a sense of trust. Sometimes a neighbor or friend of someone you want to interview must introduce you to that person. In my case, with Miss Vadie, the county librarian suggested that I talk to her: "But she may not let you in." I was hoping Miss Vadie would have good information, but I would have to respect her feelings, or she might not let me in the door at all. When I knocked, she let me in. I told her I wanted to know more about farm women and asked if we could talk. From that moment on, we not only shared information and trusted each other but also became good friends.

It is a good idea to request permission in writing to interview. This protects you and the interviewee from misunderstandings. Some interview forms give the interviewer permission to tape-record or permission to donate the tape to a school or county library.

In interviewing, the oral historian should follow these suggestions:

- Go on the interview by yourself.
- Interview only one person at a time.
- If the television is on when you arrive, visit a little bit and then ask permission to turn it off during the interview.
- Remember that background noises may be a distraction on the tape.
- When you are finished, label the tape with your name, the interviewee's name, the date, and the place.

Miss Vadie's life is her story. Her accounts of her thoughts and feelings give a picture of her life growing up on a farm in the northwestern piedmont of North Carolina. Her story helps the student of history to learn more than what can be found in history books, more about individual lives. It also helps to place those lives in the larger picture of North Carolina history.

How was Nevada Jane Hall's life similar to stories you have heard from your aunts and uncles, parents and grandparents? How would your grandparents describe their childhoods? If you would like to know, ask them. They might have a story for you. ❐

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Contact Information

We hope that you have enjoyed taking part in this distance learning program. We invite your comments and questions. Please take advantage of other distance learning programs offered by the North Carolina Museum of History, including History-in-a-Box kits, videos on demand, educator notebooks, and the Tar Heel Junior Historian Association, as well as professional development opportunities for educators. For more information, visit http://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/edu/Classroom.html.

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